



DEPARTMENT OF STATE INSTRUCTION  
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NO.: CA-6773 February 19, 1960

SUBJECT: The Iran-Iraq Boundary Dispute and the Sumar Protocol

*GG/N*

TO: American Embassy, BAGHDAD, and TEHRAN  
American Consulate, KHORRAMSHAHR, and BASRA

*[Signature]*

Reference is made to Tehran's despatch 209 of September 30, 1959 and Khorramshahr's undated OM (received by the Department in November 1959).

After considerable research, the Department is now able to provide the post with information concerning the so-called "Sumar Protocol". It is hoped that the following information will be of value to the post:

As part of the boundary settlement between the Ottoman Empire and Persia, the Constantinople Protocol of 1913 provided in Article 1 that the Delimitation Commission to be established under the Protocol should work out a special arrangement for the division of the waters of the Gangir River between the two parties. The Delimitation Commission discussed the problem of the Gangir River in its 28th session (Minutes of the Delimitation Commission, p. 45). After long debate the British and Russian Commissioners, who had the power to arbitrate between the two parties, proposed the equal division of the waters between the two countries, half of it going to Mandali in present-day Iraq, half to Sumar in Iran. A subterranean canal constructed by the inhabitants of Mandali was to be closed, but should remain the property of these inhabitants. In case the people of Sumar desired to use it, they should reach agreement with the inhabitants of Mandali. In subsequent sessions (Minutes, pp. 46 and 47) the carrying out of the decision regarding the division of the waters of the Gangir was discussed. The British and Russian Commissioners declared that this was beyond the jurisdiction of the Commissioners and that differences between the two parties should be settled by diplomatic means. If necessary, the consuls general of Great Britain and Russia in Baghdad should mediate any dispute in this matter.

The British Admiralty Handbook, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, September 1944, states on page 317 that "The Gangir water, on which the cultivators of Mandali depend, has been a source of much trouble," and on page 544 it is stated that "since 1918 cultivation has suffered seriously by the attempted monopolization of the Gangir water on the Persian side of the frontier." It should be noted, however, that in the complaint of Iraq to the League of Nations in 1934 and the subsequent discussions in the League Council the Gangir problem was not included in the Iraqi grievances.

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NEA/GTI-Iran Desk  
NEA/NE-Iraq Desk  
LR-Library  
Reference  
IRC/LR-Miss  
DeBerry  
IMR/ME-Mr.  
Liebesny

DRAFTED BY:  
NEA/EX - KAKurze:mm

2/18/60

APPROVED BY:  
NEA/EX - Adrian T. Middleton

PLACES: RME - Mr. Liebesny (By Phone)